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RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ SEP 8932
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE 5433
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO IMMEDIATE 0381
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO IMMEDIATE 6032
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM IMMEDIATE 0369
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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [VZ](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR BROWNFIELD'S SEPTEMBER 21 MEETING WITH
GOC PEACE COMMISSIONER LUIS CARLOS RESTREPO

Classified By: Ambassador William R. Brownfield
Reason: 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) GOC Peace Commissioner Restrepo said that the GOC finds it hard to control Senator Cordoba's and President Chavez' efforts to facilitate a humanitarian exchange. The FARC has little interest in an exchange, but wants to use Chavez' role to gain international recognition, create tensions between the GOC and USG, and gain space to help it outlast Uribe's presidency. The GOC and USG must work closely together to prevent the FARC from blaming them should the initiative eventually collapse. Restrepo described the ELN peace process as "exhausted," but said Chavez' role brings new energy to the talks. He also commented that he would consult with President Uribe on the usefulness of USG funding of civil society in the process. Restrepo said Uribe needs "judicial" proof of Don Berna's ongoing involvement in crime to extradite him. End Summary

THE FARC AND A HUMANITARIAN EXCHANGE

¶2. (C) In a meeting with Ambassador and PolCouns on September 21, Restrepo said the GOC accepted Senator Cordoba's initial proposal of direct GOC-FARC talks outside of Colombia with no demilitarized zone (despeje), because it coincides with President Uribe's position. The GOC hoped that by setting the rules of the game--no despeje and no return of FARC prisoners to FARC ranks--it could keep Cordoba and President Chavez under control. This has proved difficult. Cordoba has respected the GOC position of no despeje, but has ignored GOC instructions not to involve other countries or international actors in the process. She did not consult with the GOC before launching her trip to the United States to meet with "Simon Trinidad" and "Sonia," U.S. legislators, and family members of the U.S. hostages. Similarly, Chavez has supported the FARC's call for a despeje and continues to push for a meeting with FARC leader Marulanda despite the GOC position.

¶3. (C) Restrepo said the GOC needs to react each time Cordoba or Chavez exceeds the limits set by the GOC. After Cordoba met with Congressman McGovern, he called Ambassador Barco and

asked that President Uribe publicly support a meeting of U.S. Congressmen with President Chavez. At the same time, Cordoba called Uribe and urged him to publicly endorse a meeting of the family members of the U.S. hostages with Chavez. Uribe reacted sharply, telling Barco to inform McGovern he would not insert himself into "U.S. domestic politics." Restrepo said he told Cordoba and Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro they should not involve other international actors without prior GOC approval. Maduro said Chavez understood, but unilateral Chavez statements remain a problem.

14. (C) Restrepo judged that the FARC has no interest in a humanitarian accord or broader peace process. It wants to exploit Chavez' involvement to gain international recognition, create tensions between the GOC and the USG, and gain political space that will help it outlast Uribe's presidency. The GOC and USG must manage the process in a way that does not permit this or for the FARC to escape blame for the process' eventual collapse. The USG statements supporting the humanitarian initiative were positive, and caught Chavez, Cordoba, and the FARC by surprise. Restrepo continued that the USG should explain to Congressman McGovern and other U.S. legislators that the FARC will try to manipulate them and the hostages' families for political advantage.

15. (C) He said the GOC plans to demand an immediate meeting with the FARC if a FARC emissary meets with Chavez in Caracas. Such a request would highlight that the GOC and FARC do not need a despeje to hold talks on a humanitarian accord, and would be resisted by the group. If the FARC refuses to meet, the GOC will consider ending the process. Restrepo said he had explained the GOC's stance to Cordoba and Chavez. Cordoba assured him that the FARC will meet with him in Caracas, but Restrepo remains skeptical.

ELN

16. (C) In response to the Ambassador's query. Restrepo said the ELN has no political agenda and manipulates the peace process, particularly civil society groups' participation, to play for time. The GOC tries to pressure by cutting off its funding from the Swedes, Norwegians, and Swiss, and by limiting its contacts with civil society. Chavez' involvement injects some new energy into an "exhausted" process, but it does not compensate for the ELN's lack of political vision. Restrepo agreed that U.S. funding of a civil society group--if focused on a specific purpose and for a limited time period--might help move the process forward. He would consult with President Uribe and get back to the Ambassador on this issue.

DON BERNA AND EXTRADITION

17. (C) Restrepo said various officials inside and outside the GOC believe that the DEA letter outlining the evidence of Diego Fernando Murillo AKA Don Berna's on-going criminal activity does not justify his extradition. Medellin Mayor Sergio Fajardo told President Uribe that Don Berna continues to meet his obligations under the paramilitary peace process, Colombian National Police Director Oscar Naranjo said he has no proof of his involvement in criminal activity after his demobilization. Restrepo told the Ambassador that he, himself, had recommended extradition based on current evidence. Nevertheless, Uribe believes he needs "judicial" proof, such as an identified witness, to extradite Berna. Brownfield